in the strongest terms, in the name of the profession and the public, against the course adopted by the committee, and will spare no pains to ascertain in what way they have discharged the duty confided to them. Correspondents complain, amongst other things, that they were put to considerable extra trouble by the largeness of the scale on which the drawings were required to be, and that they received no thanks (a cheap return), in the letter informing them they might obtain their drawings again. As, however, we do not wish to raise an angry feeling, if it can be avoided, we refrain from printing the letters, and further comment at this moment.

DISSOLUTION OF THE CAMBRIDGE CAMDEN SOCIETY.

A REPORT to the effect that the society intended to appeal against Sir H. Jenner Fust's judgment in the stone-altar case, which was very generally circulated a fortnight ago, was afterwards as generally contradicted. A few days since, however, at a meeting of the parishioners of St. Sepulchre's, the parish in which the Round Church stands, it was formally announced that the report was correct, and that an appeal to the Privy Council, on the part of the Camden Society, was in progress. The result remains to be seen, but is hardly doubtful.

The proposed dissolution of the society has led to much correspondence, as might have been expected, especially in the local papers. One of these writers says, if it is to be abolished, why, "at any rate, should not another society be modelled upon its remains? In the sister university, a society has existed even longer than the Camden; and, notwithstanding the theological contests with which the harmony of that university has been disturbed, has pursued a quiet course of usefulness. Why not, then, establish afresh an architectural society at Cambridge, as well as at Oxford? And why should not one go on as quietly and usefully as the other has done? The very title of the Camden Society was a misnomer; no one knew what it meant; whether it was assumed in honour of our late revered chancellor, during whose term of presidency over the university the society was formed, or whether it derived its name from the author of the "Britannia," there being in London a society already bearing that title. Let the name, therefore, of the society be changed, and let its constitution be changed also; but let not the country lose the benefits which such a society must confer."

As a further inducement to the re-modelling of the society, it is suggested "that, unless a new society be formed, the valuable collections of books, drawings, models, plans, &c., of the old society will be dispersed, which would be a sin and a shame: but if a new society were formed, I have little doubt, from the well-known liberality of the Camden Society, that they would be glad to transfer this collection to the keeping of the new society, as the nucleus of a more extensive collection."

It is to be regretted that in controversies, such as that produced by the proceedings of this society, advocates adopt the most opposite extremes. Thus the Rev. Mr. Close publishes a sermon, entitled "The restoration of churches is the restoration of popery;" while a late Hulsean lecturer issues a discourse, headed "The restoration of Churches is the duty of Christians." So that a Romish logician might say, as the *conclusion* of the syllogism with protestant *premises*, "therefore, the restoration of popery is the duty of Christians."

We insert, with pleasure, the following letter from a revered and accomplished correspondent:—

Sir,—I have just read in THE BUILDER, with much painful interest, the report of the late meeting of the Cambridge Camden Society, and the announcement of its intended dissolution.

Surely this is both an unwise and unnecessary step. The society has been the means of doing a vast amount of good in various ways, and is in a position to direct; or at least to assist, the growing taste for the study of church architecture, of late years unhappily, but little understood.

I was one of its earliest members, and shall be one of its latest defenders. I am no supporter of any of the extreme ecclesiastical and theological opinions which have been mixed up in the minds and doings of some, and do not see any necessary connection between the simple study of architectural design and those views referred to.

Cannot the Society be remodelled and reformed, and its objects be definitely and decisively determined? This done, it would be the means of yet greater utility, and secure the co-operation of many who have looked upon it with coldness or suspicion, or even utter dislike.

At least, it is due to the members (and especially to those who, like myself, have compounded by one subscription for all future payments), to give them an opportunity of expressing their opinion as to the question of dissolution. That such an evil may be averted, and that the present unhappy dissension in our church may soon pass away, is the earnest wish of your's, truly,

A YORKSHIRE CAMDENIAN.

Feb. 24th, 1845.

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

FEB. 18.—Sir John Rennie, president, in the chair.

The paper read was by Mr. De la Garde, with a supplement, by Mr. James Green, M. Inst. C.E. It contained a history of the Canal of Exeter, from the year 1540, when it was first projected, to the present time.* In 1563 the Chamber of Exeter engaged John Tren, of Glamorganshire, as their engineer, and under his directions a canal, with pound locks, similar in all essential points to those of the present day, was constructed from Wear to Exeter. The depths of the canal at first was 3 ft. by 16 ft. in width; subsequently, at various periods, as the commerce of the city increased, the dimensions were enlarged, and after an arduous struggle, which extended from the year 1563 until 1835, when the Chamber ceased to exist as a corporate body, it succeeded in perfecting a ship canal from Turf, near Topsham, on the river Exe, capable of conveying vessels of 500 tons burthen to the quays of Exeter. The latter work was accomplished by Mr. James Green, whose reports were given, confirmed by those of Mr. Telford. They abounded in interesting illustrations of engineering difficulties, and the method of overcoming them. We may mention one. This was in the excavation for the entrance lock at Turf, which, after being carried to a depth of 20 feet through a stiff alluvial clay without water, was pressed down by the embankment 10 feet, and the bottom of the lock-pit rose to a greater height than the sides, exhibiting on its surface peat moss, marine plants, fern, &c. A complete kerbing or sheating of whole timber piles was therefore driven, the same being strutted by transverse timbers, and the excavation made and the lock founded in lengths between the transverse struts: as it was feared that the pressure of water from the tide would have a tendency to raise the invert and gate platforms, trunks of elm planking were laid in the rubble masonry, forming the bed of the invert, which were carried under and throughout the lock, and terminated in a vertical well beyond the higher gates of the lock; this allowed the subwater to circulate and rise without obstruction.

This, as well as other ingenious modes of overcoming impediments encountered by Mr. Green, was highly applauded. The archæological researches of Mr. De la Garde, and the extracts from old acts and charters respecting this canal, were of an interesting character, and deserve careful attention, as it must be concluded that this is the oldest canal, with locks, in the kingdom, having been commenced nearly fifty years before the Sankey cut.

The discussion which ensued, drew from Mr. Cubitt a promise of a description of the works and oblique weirs on the river Severn, which have excited so much discussion among engineers.

The meeting was adjourned to Tuesday evening, the 25th inst.

HOUSES IN HULL.—Mr. Cardwell, in a lecture "on the architecture of the present age," says, for bad construction, no town in the kingdom can furnish a greater number of houses than the town of Hull.

* An account of this canal, by Mr. De la Garde, will be found in the "Archæologia," vol. XXVIII. p. 7.—ED.

THE MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON'S FIRST SOIREE.

ON Saturday last, Lord Northampton gave his first soirée to the Fellows of the Royal Society. The rooms were crowded with men of station or of note. Royalty, rank, wealth, and talent, were all represented. The noble, the legislator, the poet, the man of science, the artist, were all congregated together, to confer mutual pleasure, and, by extending each other's views, mutual advantage.

Amongst the various objects of interest displayed on the tables were a *fac-simile* of the "late lamented Portland vase" (as a shopkeeper in Regent-street calls it); a model of the Chapter House of Salisbury Cathedral, exhibited by Mr. Britton; a recently invented instrument, called the "volute delineator," for forming the lines of the characteristic feature of the Ionic capital; a fine portrait of George IV., in *mosaic*, from Mr. Rogers's collection, and some specimens of glass pavement. The noble and amiable host exerted himself, as he always does, to increase the gratification of his guests.

ON PORTLAND STONE.

BY C. H. SMITH.

AT the Isle of Portland there are the remains of several buildings that were erected with stone from the neighbouring quarries, long before that material was generally known or considered of sufficient value to be used in the construction of the principal buildings of the metropolis. A large portion of the island has been the property of the Crown during many centuries, and so early as the reign of Henry the Eighth, that monarch caused a castle to be erected at Portland, and another on the opposite shore, near Weymouth; one of these has been continued as a garrison to the present time, the other has long since been left to ruin; nevertheless the stone with which the walls are built does not appear to have undergone any decomposition worthy of notice. Hollinshed, who wrote his Chronicles of England prior to the year 1574, has given rather a long account of Portland Isle; he has also, in another part of his works, devoted an entire chapter to the subject of "Quarries of stone for building;" but in neither case has he made even the slightest allusion to Portland stone. Camden the historian (who died in 1623) has also minutely described the Island of Portland, without mentioning the stone-quarries; and it is worthy of remark, that in the next paragraph he describes the island of Purbeck, distant about fifteen or twenty miles, as having "many sorts of good stone, from which large quantities are carried to London, to the great advantage of the inhabitants." From these two eminent writers being wholly silent on the subject of Portland stone, we may reasonably infer that at that time it was a material not generally known or used, except in the immediate vicinity of the quarries.

James the First appointed Inigo Jones his chief architect and surveyor-general of his Majesty's works; under this appointment he had to survey the crown lands at Portland; and his discrimination very soon led to the introduction of Portland stone for all the principal buildings in and about London. The banqueting-room, or military chapel at Whitehall, was begun in the year 1619, and finished in two years. As far as I can search or learn, this is the earliest building of magnitude constructed with Portland stone in London, or at any considerable distance from the quarries. In 1631, Inigo Jones received orders to repair the old cathedral of St. Paul; this was performed by "casing great part of the outside, and adding a grand Corinthian portico to the west front, all of Portland stone." From that time it became the chief material used for ornamental architecture, not only in the south of England, but in many parts round the coast of this country and Ireland.

After the fire of London in 1666, up to the beginning of the present century, the architects and builders of London scarcely ever thought of using any other kind of stone, except for pavements and similar subordinate purposes. Sir Christopher Wren used Portland stone for St. Paul's Cathedral and other public buildings, because he considered it the best material then known, and on account of the quarries belonging to the Crown, as well as their being most eligibly situated for water